

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 02884 202340Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 AID-05 MCT-01 EB-07 /073 W  
-----019258 202350Z /14

P R 201727Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4648  
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2884

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, ES

SUBJECT: THE LAST DAYS OF PRESIDENT MOLINA

1. SUMMARY. THE PREDOMINANT MOOD OF EL SALVADOR IS ONE OF UNEASY WAITING FOR MOLINA TO EXIT AND ROMERO TO ARRIVE. A NERVOUS QUIET REIGNS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A STRIDENT EXCHANGE IN NEWSPAPER ADS BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS CRITICS OVER THE FORMER'S ROLE IN FORMENTING SOCIAL AND TEMPORAL JUSTICE, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE RURAL POOR. END SUMMARY.

2. EL SALVADOR IS IN A STATE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION, NERVOUSLY WAITING OUT THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF THE MOLINA TENURE. EVERY-ONE'S FINGERS ARE CROSSED HOPING THAT NOTHING FURTHER DISRUPTS PROSPECTS OF A PEACEFUL TRANSITION. THIS ANXIETY, AND THE SERIES OF PROBLEMS THE COUNTRY HAS HAD GOING BACK TO THE JULY 1976 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GENERAL ROMERO WOULD SUCCEED MOLINA, HAVE PRODUCED AN ALMOST UNANIMOUS DESIRE TO REACH THE END OF MOLINA'S TERM AND BEGIN A NEW ERA, HOWEVER GOOD OR BAD THE IN-COMING TEAM MIGHT BE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 02884 202340Z

3. A FEELING PERSISTS AMONG MANY SECTORS THAT THE OPPOSITION - EITHER THE FRUSTRATED UNO OR THE RADICAL LEFTIST FLP/ERP, OR BOTH - WILL ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE JULY 1 ROMERO INAUGURATION. RUMORS ABOUND OF A KIDNAPPING, A MARCH THROUGH THE STREETS, OR SOMESUCH. THE EMBASSY QUESTIONS WHETHER THE UNO, WITH MOST OF ITS LEADERSHIP OUT OF THE COUNTRY OR INTIMIDATED INTO

IN ACTION SINCE THE FEBRUARY ELECTION, HAS THE CAPACITY TO MOUNT A MASS PROTEST. THE URBAN TERRORISTS, NOT HEARD FROM SINCE THE EARLY MAY ASSASSINATION OF BORGONOVO, HAVE ALSO COME IN FOR THEIR SHARE OF PURSUIT AND INTERDICTION. WITHOUT ACCEPTING GOVERNMENT CLAIMS THAT EVERY RECENT SHOOTOUT HAS BEEN WITH ELEMENTS OF THE FPL AND ERP, OR SECURITY FORCE BODY COUNTS OF TERRORISTS KILLED, THE EMBASSY DOUBTS EITHER TERRORIST GROUP CAN PULL OFF A SPECTACULAR CRIME. GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE CONDUCTED BROAD SWEEPS IN AND AROUND THE TOWNS OF AGUILARES, CHALETENANGO AND ZACATECOLUCA. USE OF THE STATE OF SIEGE TOOLS, AND INCREASED VISIBILITY OF POLICE UNITS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, MUST HAVE DAMPENING EFFECT ON THE MOVEMENT AND PLANNING CAPABILITIES OF THE TERRORISTS. THIS WOULD BE TRUE EVEN IF MEMBERSHIP ROSTERS AND OTHER HARD EVIDENCE OF WHO THE TERRORISTS ARE HAD NOT FALLEN INTO GOVERNMENT HANDS, AS THE SECURITY SERVICES CLAIM TO EMBASSY CONTACTS IN CONFIDENCE.

4. SOMEWHAT OUT OF KEEPING WITH APPEARANCE OF TRANQUILITY, ONE NETTLE OF OPPOSITION AND POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS CONFRONTATION REMAINS IN FULL VIEW. THIS IS A PUBLIC POLEMIC BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THOSE WHO ACCUSE IT OF FOMENTING REVOLUTION AND VIOLENCE IN THE CAMPO. THE LATTER UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT SECURITY SERVICES. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER ARRESTS OF PRIESTS SINCE THE RELEASE OF FATHER VICTOR GUEVARA SIGUENZA (SAN SALVADOR 2516) OR ASSASSINATIONS SINCE THE DEATH OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 02884 202340Z

FATHER NAVARRO, A SERIES OF STRIDENT NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH AND REBUTTALS HAVE KEPT THE EMBROGLIO ALIVE.

5. THE STRONGEST AND MOST DIRECT ATTACK AGAINST THE CHURCH AND ITS "INCITEMENT OF CLASS WARFARE" EFFORTS AMONG THE CAMPESINOS HAVE BEEN AUTHORED BY FARO (AGRICULTURAL FRONT OF THE EASTERN REGION), AN ARCH-CONSERVATIVE GROUP FOUNDED IN JULY 1976 TO DEFEND LANDOWNERS' PROPERTY RIGHTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION FIRST PROJECT. AFTER ITS SUCCESS IN THAT EFFORT, FARO WENT NATIONAL AND NOW CLAIMS TO SPEAK FOR THE RURAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SECTOR. DURING THE ISTA CRISIS, FARO WENT ON RECORD THAT ITS MEMBERS WERE WILLING, IF NECESSARY, TO DEFEND THEIR PROPERTY WITH THEIR LIVES. MANY SUSPECT FARO OF BANKROLLING, IF NOT PARTICIPATING IN MUCH OF THE RECENT RIGHT-WING TERRORIST ACTS AGAINST THE CHURCH AND OTHERS.

6. FARO IS NOT ALONE IN ITS MEDIA EFFORT TO DISCOURAGE AND DISCREDIT THE CHURCH'S TEMPORAL ACTIVITIES. ANY NUMBER OF "ASSOCIATIONS" HAVE SURFACED CLAIMING TO SPEAK FOR THE "TRUE" CATHOLIC FAITHFUL. WITH NAMES SUCH AS "THE SALVADORAN CATHOLIC

ASSOCIATION", "CATHOLIC MOTHERS GROUP", "ASSOCIATION OF FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST THE KING", ETC., THEY FILL PAGES WITH WARNINGS OF COMMUNIST PENETRATION AND TEACHINGS AMONG THE PRIESTHOOD. ANOTHER GROUP CALLING ITSELF "THE KNIGHTS OF CHRIST THE KING" HAS REAPPEARED AFTER A FIVE-YEAR SILENCE. IN THE EARLY 1970'S, THE KNIGHTS WERE THOUGHT RESPONSIBLE FOR A NUMBER OF VIOLENT ACTS COMMITTED IN THE STYLE OF KU KLUX KLAN NIGHTRIDERS.

7. THE JESUITS HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT AS THE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS OF RADICALISM WITHIN THE SALVADORAN CHURCH. TWO ADS HAVE BEEN PLACED BY THAT ORDER IN DEFENSE OF THE CHURCH'S

RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST CAMPESINOS IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR DIGNITY AND GREATER PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY. THE JESUIT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAN SA 02884 202340Z

DEFENSE, LACED WITH QUOTES FROM POPES JOHN XXIII AND PAUL VI AND THE CONFERENCE OF MEDELLIN, ADMITS THAT PRIESTS HAVE WORKED WITH CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS FECCAS AND THE UTC. THE ORDER CATEGORICALLY DENIES EITHER FOUNDING OR CONTROLLING EITHER OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS, OR INCITING THE MEMBERSHIPS TO COMMIT VIOLENT ACTS. THE PRIESTS ASK WHY THE RICH ARE PERMITTED TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES AND DEFEND THEIR VESTED INTERESTS THROUGH SUCH AS FARO AND ANEP, BOTH OF WHICH WENT SO FAR DURING THE ISTA CRISIS AS TO PUBLICLY THREATEN THE GOVERNMENT WITH VIOLENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE, WHILE CAMPESINOS ARE DENIED THAT RIGHT?

8. COMMENT. THE EMBASSY HAS ITS COLLECTIVE FINGERS CROSSED, AS DOES EVERYONE ELSE.

LUBENSKY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 SAN SA 02884 202340Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT, TENURE OF OFFICE, REORGANIZATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 20-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977SANSAS02884  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770220-0389  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** SAN SALVADOR  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770639/aaaabifm.tel  
**Line Count:** 157  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 156ce779-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2092743  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE LAST DAYS OF PRESIDENT MOLINA  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, PINS, ES, (MOLINA BARRAZA, ARTURO ARMANDO)  
**To:** STATE GUATEMALA  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/156ce779-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009